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Confession

To whom does the confessor confess? The subject of the Sacrament of Reconciliation for clergy, not by clergy, is something I have never heard clergy discuss among themselves.

Finding a good confessor is hard to find if one is a member of the clergy. Clergy are often not the best at trust issues with one another. And if there is a high level of friendship between the clergy, the friendship with familiarity can be an impediment to the depth that promotes growth in the spiritual process of the confession. I suspect priests would be better confessors if they regularly went to confession themselves.

The subject of confession, or more properly the Sacrament of Reconciliation is often neglected in the Episcopal community by both clergy and lay. Why is this ancient spiritual ascetical discipline

so avoided? One cause for avoidance might be the very name "sin." There is a fear of the anathema of the "get thee on thy knees thou evil liver" of the old prayer book. Have you ever wondered what an evil liver is? Most of us do not like the branding of fundamentalist Calvinist depravity. Another cause for avoidance of the sacrament might be the resistance to honesty in our own spiritual lives.

Yes the Sacrament of Reconciliation is about sin. We must spell that word wrong because we treat it as if it were a four-lettered word. But more importantly the Sacrament of Penance or Reconciliation "confession" is about relationship. More specifically, it is about the healing of broken relationship, the healing of relationship with God, with other, with self. Reconciliation is at the heart of the Christian life.

When I was an active priest I heard many confessions from people who were not

Episcopalians. But I rarely or almost never heard a confession from a member of the parish. That always struck me as odd. It is right there in our Book of Common Prayer but a grace rarely received, a cup held out to us which we refuse to drink.

One suggestion for those hearing confessions is the concept of Silence. Notice the operative word for the confessor is "hearing" confessions. Often the priest feels challenged to offer spiritual counsel which can be God or can be ego speaking. Perhaps because we don't often make confessions as clergy, we are lacking in the skills to hear confessions. Often silence after the confession instead of words is very useful, a guided time for the penitent to simply sit before the Lord in the company of the priest to receive the reconciling love of Christ.

Confession is about much more than merely listing one's sins and asking God's mercy and forgiveness. It is a

way of integrity. One can do alone on one's knees all that one does in confession, but the reality is one usually doesn't. It is about more than sin per se. It is about honestly reflecting out loud on one's path and choices, the goal of becoming In Christ and the ways we wobble. It is there to help realign us spiritually. We get our tires realigned with annual automobile care and our furnaces checked in the fall for leaks and efficiency. Our spiritual life also requires maintenance.

Confession is a spiritual discipline. Spiritual direction is a process much in vogue and the fulfillment of spiritual direction is found in the Sacrament of Reconciliation. It is a tool that moves us past our obstacles and beyond our own limitations. It is a mirror to face the places we avoid or reject the Holy Spirit in our lives, the stones on which we stub our toes. The Sacrament of Reconciliation is a reception; it is the receptive compassionate healing love of our Lord Jesus

expressed in outward sign and word.

Confession is the door to the Transfiguration in our lives, the path to living the resurrection, a movement from death to life, a metanoia. We never get to the goal of becoming completely Christ-like. But it reminds us that the goal is a real part of our lives, to love the Lord with all our heart and all our soul and all our mind and all our strength and our neighbor as our self.

For starters, I suggest spending some time with the two forms of the Sacrament of Reconciliation in the Book of Common Prayer. Read, study, and pray the prayers there; reflect and ponder. And then find someone who can be your regular confessor. There is grace in that process.

God bless.

— The Rev. Sister
Judith Schenck, priest
and vowed solitary in the
Diocese of Montana

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Worship Changes the World

THERE IS a saying, which originates with the French Catholic poet Charles Péguy, that "everything begins in mysticism and ends in politics." My intention is, in a sense, to begin with politics and end with mysticism. That is to say, I would like to trace the lineaments of developing Anglican identity by beginning to look at the way in which Anglicanism has engaged with society, and from there try to unfold how Anglicanism nurtures and preserves its sense of the divine mystery.

Here is William Temple, writing in the 1920s, quite early in his career, about "Church, Christendom and Kingdom":

The Church is the fellowship of Christ's disciples, welded together by the operation of his Spirit within them into the organised society which is his Body. It may contain a small or a large proportion of the citizens of any country

where it works. Its own distinctive activity is worship, the imparting and receiving of the Word and Sacraments, and the self-dedication of its members to his service in the world. As they thus serve him, they leaven society; and so there grows up a whole civilisation which is in greater or lesser degree Christian, in the sense that it is moulded by the principles of the Gospel.

There, I suggest, is a very clear statement of that vision of Anglican identity, and indeed Christian identity, which sees the life of the Church at the heart of things, pervading the structures of society, the Church remaining in some sense a body given distinctness by its worship, and yet with boundaries that are fairly open.

The roots are very deep in Anglican history and thinking, and Temple is there giving expression to that vision that is most classically put forward just before 1600 by the great Richard Hooker, for

whom the Church and the commonwealth were essentially one body. The Church is, for Hooker, English society at prayer in England; and anywhere else the Church is Scottish, or Swiss, or French, or German (or whatever national society) at prayer.

We shouldn't suppose too quickly that this means a narrow pietistic or private sense of what Christian identity and Christian worship are about. Temple was very clear about that, and, in another quotation from a later work published under the title *Citizen and Churchman*, he expresses what for many people is again a classical Anglican sense of worship as the drawing together and the offering to God of what is happening in society. Temple writes here that in the eucharist:

... we bring familiar forms of economic wealth, which is always the product of man's labour exercised upon God's gifts, and offer them as symbols of our earthly goods. Because we have offered our

"earthly" goods to God, He gives them back to us as heavenly goods, binding us into union with Christ in that self-offering which is His royalty.

The eucharist divorced from life loses reality; life devoid of worship loses direction and power. It is the worshipping life that can transform the world.

So, for Temple, as for a good many other Anglican theologians of that generation around the 1940s and '50s, the renewal of worship is itself a social and political requirement. It is to do with the offering of human goods to God, so that they may be received back as divine goods; and, through that receiving of divine goods, society itself is bit by bit transformed, or, at the very least, soaked in some degree by the Christian vision and Christian practice.

— The Most Rev. Dr.

Rowan Williams,

Archbishop of Canterbury,
via CHURCH TIMES, London
(www.churchtimes.co.uk)

Neglecting the Reading

Have you ever noticed how the churches where you are least likely to hear the Bible being read are evangelical ones? One of the strange rules of thumb I've discovered, visiting many churches in my role as a diocesan missionary, is that the more evangelical the church is, the fewer verses of the Bible you are likely to hear read in worship. When I go to a church in the central or liberal tradition, I will always encounter two Bible readings. When I go to one of the catholic parishes in the diocese, I will usually hear four pieces of Scripture read - Old Testament, Psalm, New Testament and Gospel - with the words printed out on the service sheet for the people to follow. However, when I visit an evangelical parish, I will usually hear only one passage of the Bible.

A few years ago I went to worship at St. Helen's, Bishopsgate, which has a strong reputation for expository preaching, and was surprised to discover that even there we

only had one reading, 12 verses from the New Testament. In the place where I was expecting an Old Testament lesson, someone stood up to give a potted biography of Dr. Martin Lloyd-Jones instead. Readings from the lives of the saints were a popular feature of medieval catholic worship, but were not something I expected to encounter at St. Helen's! The same evening I went to a service at Holy Trinity, Brompton, and noted that in a guest service lasting one-and-a-half hours, there was only space for six verses of the Bible to be read out loud. I have recently returned from my first visit to New Wine, a big festival of worship and teaching at Shepton Mallet. At the closing Eucharist of the festival, there was no reading from the Bible at all - apart from one verse which was quoted at the beginning of the homily. During the daily 'Bible-reading slot' I went to Venue 2 (the alternative venue aimed at a slightly younger audience) where one morning I heard a very stimulating talk on evangelism but no reading from

the Bible or even specific reference to any passage of Scripture at all. It would be wrong to suggest that biblical teaching was not available at New Wine – there were some outstanding seminars and I'm told the early morning Bible studies were excellent. What puzzled me was that in the main gatherings for worship so little space was given to the public reading of Scripture.

This strange reluctance to give time to the public reading of Scripture runs contrary to what we know of worship in biblical times. In the Old Testament, in Nehemiah 8, we read how all the people assembled in one place and listened to the law being read for six hours at a stretch. The reading of scripture was central to the worship of the Early Church, building on Jewish practice where the reading of the Torah and the prophets had pride of place in synagogue worship – as for example when Jesus was offered the scroll of the prophet Isaiah in the synagogue at Nazareth. In the Pastoral Epistles Paul urges Timothy: “Until I come

devote yourself to the public reading of scripture, to preaching and to teaching...” (1 Timothy 4:13). What we give time to in a service of worship is an indication of the priority we give to it. Surely the time has come to recover a central place in worship for the careful reading of both Old and New Testaments, and for the use (in modern or traditional style) of the psalms? In an age when there is very little Bible study in schools and when the practice of personal Bible reading is dropping away, even among evangelicals, the need for the public reading of Scripture in church is all the more vital – otherwise how will people ever hear the story? Church services are opportunities to show people with no previous background how to read the Bible and to whet their appetite.

However simply reading words off a page without preparation is not enough – if the Bible is to communicate, it needs to be read well, and with imagination. Yet often I hear a reader begin with the

words, 'He said to them...' with no attempt to indicate who is being referred to. Even regular churchgoers often have a very hazy grasp of the broad outline of the biblical story, and so readings from the Bible need a sentence or two of introduction - we can no longer assume that people will know the context. This of course requires some preparation, but if only we gave the same time to preparing the readings as we do the music or the sermon, how powerful those readings could be - especially with all visual images and dramatized versions now available to help us. Evangelical churches may be strong on preaching, but this is not a substitute for Bible reading. When I train adults and children to read the Bible in church, I always say to them that their role as a reader in the service is more important in some ways than my role as the preacher - because when I preach I hope that I say is the word of God, but when they read I know that what they say is the word of God. Yet in places where the Bible is heard for

one minute and the preacher is heard for 30, are we not in danger of allowing a high doctrine of the Spirit's inspiration of prophecy and preaching to take priority over the Spirit's work in inspiring Scripture?

All of this makes me concerned that the current phase of charismatic renewal could go the way of the American "Great Awakenings" in the 19th century. When the Awakenings began in the days of Wesley and Whitefield and Edwards, there was a strong emphasis on biblical preaching. In the succeeding American awakenings, more and more emphasis was given to looking for an emotional or charismatic response, to the point where the preaching became less and less doctrinal and more of a "warm-up" to encourage the Spirit to come. Ultimately the Great Awakenings degenerated into mere revivalism and petered out. Should this give us pause for thought today?

— Mark Ireland, *The Church of England Newspaper*

Families Need God the Father

PEOPLE are accepted as Jewish if they have Jewish mothers. It was once explained to me: "we can more easily establish who a person's mother is than who the father is."

This cautious way of establishing identity seems justified after the report of Professor Mark Bellis and a team from John Moores University, Liverpool, published in the *Journal of Epidemiology & Community Health* recently. Their research suggests that in about four per cent of families, a man may not be the biological father of the child he is bringing up and believes to be his own.

The findings have serious consequences. The report acknowledges the devastating impact that such a discovery can have. It can affect the physical and mental health of adults and child. It can tear families apart. A man in an apparently contented marriage, who finds his much loved ten-year-old

boy was the product of an affair of his wife's, may justifiably feel traumatized. It may not be much compensation to find that his wife's affair was brief, or merely the tail-end of a drunken evening in his absence. He has to come to terms with more than the shock of deceit. There is also the irreparable loss of the blood tie with his son.

As the number of men seeking paternity testing soars, the problem could affect the stability of families, as well as increase the number of legal battles. For pressure groups such as Families Need Fathers, it seems like yet another assault on the vital relationship between men and their children, and a further weakening of the confidence of fathers. It could also be storing up problems for many children in trying to come to terms with whose they really are.

It has long been acknowledged that knowing who are our parents gives us the security of identity. It provides us with a tacit basis for understanding ourselves and

knowing our location in history and relationships. The need to establish identity seems foundational for human beings. It lies at the heart of the Christian faith, conveyed to us by Christ in his invitation to call God "Father." If God is our father, then we are God's children, and bear God's image. We have right of access to parental care; we can walk with confidence because we are loved.

In human relationships, these days, when identity seems so tied to genes, it is important to put biology in perspective. Certainly, the loss of security can be considerable if a child finds the man she calls "Dad" is not her biological father; while the father who has invested so much of himself in his child can feel his own identity shaken.

Yet who we are is not just a matter of DNA, and fatherhood is not simply about blood ties. It is even more about care and nurture, generosity and self-giving. It is the quality of parental love and involvement, not just the

contribution of sperm, that builds up a child's identity. It is the integrity of the parental relationship, not the biological mix, that gives a child security.

It seems that there is a dual task for the Church. One is to develop a better and more accessible theology of parenthood for those who need it most. The second is to recognize the pain of families going through crisis, and to be more on hand to offer the pastoral love and care required. These needs are becoming urgent. Fathers especially may well need to hear more from us in the days ahead.

— Dr. Elaine Storkey,
*President of Tearfund and
Senior Research Fellow at
Wycliffe Hall, Oxford*



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Sending the Digest

Dear Editor, ANGLICAN DIGEST,

We, congregation of St. Benedict, here thank you so much for sending the issues of THE ANGLICAN DIGEST for more than 15 years. We thank God and also those who had been paying our subscription.

It is the most important digest that we receive. We read it from cover to cover then passed it on to our other missions. It is the only link of our deanery with the Episcopal Church. It is best and excellence in journalism and editorial.

It helps in our evangelism and in converting our Co-Igorot pagan people. Congratulation of your continuous 47 years publication. We has special thanksgiving sung mass Oct. 10 celebrating your 47 years publication and no doubt helped many people.

Though we can not send any donation this time for we are one of the poorest of the poor mission, we beg you continue sending us even late issues read by subscribers. We pray the generous people who had been paying our subscription will continue doing so. Again we need the *Digest* very much to christianize our pagan Igorot. Yes, for we belong to the non-Christian tribes and cultural minorities of the Philippines so that we are behind in Civilization and Christianity.

Again, thank you very much and be assured of our continuous prayers for all of you and keep up the good work.

Your loving Igorot converted Episcopalians in the remote areas of the Philippines.

- Fr. Augusto M. Cunning,
St. Benedict, Kin-Iway,
Besao, Philippines



A PRAYER FOR

New York

*Praise be to Thee, O God, for courage to
dream and strength to build.*

*Thanks be to Thee for empires won and kingdoms
yet to come; and for lakes and coursing rivers
on which has passed the commerce of a continent.*

*Bless, Lord, these generous valleys and ancient hills;
and the harbor at their edge where ocean and earth
are married in so great a portal,
where ebbs and flows the rhythm of exchange between
the Old World and the New.*

*Grant only, O Father, that those who are
posted at such a gate may match to their tall towers
the hope of their spirit; and ever to keep open
the sacred path to a country wider than their own;
through Jesus Christ our Lord.*

Amen.

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NEARER TO THE HEART OF GOD: Daily Readings with the Christian Mystics, compiled and edited by Bernard Bangley, a retired Presbyterian minister living in Lexington, Virginia.

Although not specifically tied to Lent, the selections run from January through December, this book of meditations can — and, indeed, should — be used at whatever date you choose to pick it up and start absorbing it. Ash Wednesday this year falls on 1 March. If you start the book on Ash Wednesday you will begin with a marvelous selection from Lorenzo Scupoli's *The Spiritual Combat* dealing with the one-ness of God and beauty. If you continue your daily reading you will read an excerpt from William Tyndale's *Exposition on the Sermon on the Mount*, which deals with mercy, at Easter. And if you faithfully follow the book through the year you will read an excerpt from Gueric of Igny's *Liturgical Sermons* on Christmas Day.

The excerpt starts with these words: "Do you want to see the humility of God? Look in the manger and see him lying there."

A book to carry you through the liturgical and natural seasons of the year. A book to draw you closer to God.

Item L060T (softbound, 399 pp, appendices, notes) **\$17.95**

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ability to bridge the message of the ancient biblical texts with the distinct needs of modern people. Intellectually engaging, pastorally wise, and beautifully written, *The Undoing of Death* is accented throughout with thirty-three artistic masterpieces depicting the events of Holy Week, making it a feast for the eye as well as the soul.

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Michael Ford invites readers to join him for a modern spiritual canticle as he retraces the steps of his pilgrimage.

Ford joined the BBC as a news producer during the fall of the Berlin Wall and the Gulf War. Then, after seminary, he followed his calling into the realm of the BBC's religion and ethics department, reporting on Radio 4 from Britain, Northern Ireland, the United States, the Middle East, and Hong Kong.

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ing essential Christian teachings from those of lesser importance. As respected thinker and educator David Willis explores the Nicene Creed in this new book; he provides clues for meaningfully interpreting this most ecumenical of church creeds in the 21st century.

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Even Jesus Died

An interesting quote from “actress” Kate Hudson in connection with her voodoo-themed movie, *The Skeleton Key*: “I believe our minds are powerful enough to manifest whatever we’d like,” (*Time*, 15 Aug., 2005, p. 78). This is the same person who suggested that monogamy was unrealistic, but possible...if one tries very hard. Similar quotes in the wake of hurricane Katrina go something like this: “How could this have happened?...We need to make sure disasters like this do not happen again!” Some are referring to the hurricane, I might add, not the aftermath.

In recent weeks, I have had to struggle with the death of my good friend, and “father in the faith,” John Claypool. He was very much on the road to recovery. My son and I visited with him and took him communion just a few weeks ago. When Laura brought me the news early on a Saturday morning, one of my first reactions was “No...I can’t believe it...he

was getting better.” [See page 36.]

Dealing with, struggling with, living with, things that are beyond our control is a very, old problem. Dates back to, let’s see, the Garden of Eden. Please remember that the “temptation” tossed to the real “first couple,” was not a Granny Smith apple, but the words, “Eat this, and you will be like God,” (Genesis 3:5).

It does not take me long in the beginning of my day to realize I am not God. Are there days when I wonder what God is up to? You bet. Are there days when I think God is not necessarily running the universe the way I would like? No doubt about it. Am “I” God? Nope.

That’s why Kate Hudson’s quote is down right silly. That’s why the wish of statespersons that “disasters should not happen,” is wishful thinking, but mostly wishful and little thinking. And that is why, though I am sad, and grief stricken, I had to deal with the reality that my friend John has left this life for the next.

Now it is true, for reasons I do not fully understand, that it appears God has chosen to step back from always protecting his children – at least from the things from which we would most like protection. Whether we choose to embrace it or not, one of the teachings springing from the doctrine of original sin is that one “fall out” of sin is evil in the world – disease, destruction, rust, decay, and death. I do not believe that God decided to “pick” on the Gulf Coast with Katrina. It was a “natural” disaster not “supernatural.”

The fulcrum that balances our understanding of God and human suffering is called by theologians, “theodicy;” and there are about as many theories as there are theologians’ noses. The more important issue is that we have to find ways to deal with what we do not control – with our human limits.

Take death for instance. We will, all of us, die. We can prolong it, but we cannot prevent it. Even Jesus died. Now in the face of that

knowledge, we could adopt a “Hudsonian” philosophy (that our minds can “manifest whatever we want.” If that were true, I for one would be “manifesting” a life with no cancer, heart problems, joint creaks, and the list goes on. Or, we can step back and find our real place in the world – creatures created by God, given the gift of life who are called above all things to be in relationship with God and one another. In order to be in relationship with God and others, I have to turn more to them than to myself.

The point I am creeping toward is that God never promised we would not have to walk through the valley of death, (Psalm 23); He only said that when we walk through it, if we let him, God will travel along.

The great 20th century German theologian Karl Barth (d. 1968) suggested one of God’s first words to human kind is “Nein!” (No!). He witnessed the damage caused by the liberal theologians of his own nation who were too closely tied to

human accomplishments – thus leading most of them down the path of supporting the aims of Nazi Germany. Barth argued that the God who is revealed in the cross of Jesus challenges and overthrows any attempt to partner God with human cultures, accomplishments or triumphs. Thus, God's "no," is a no to the often (perhaps always) "self" obsessed human. God's "no" is for the human's own good. In the same way one of a parent's first words to his/her child is "no," (just ask a parent who has watched their toddler reach for the stove top), God's "no" to our belief that we, at the end of the day, really have more "control" over our lives, is also God's way of saying, "No, you really don't...what you really need is to begin with me, give your life to me, give your ambitions and achievements to me...and then we'll be on the right path." This is what Paul meant when he warned the Spirit-filled Christian, "Do not conform any longer to the pattern of this world, but be transformed by the

renewing of your mind," (Rom. 12:2).

Jesus' "Nein!" to us is found in the words, "I am the way, the truth and the life," (John 14:6) – it was his call to hold fast to him when you realize you can't have it all (a la Hudson); when you are facing disaster and human suffering (a la Katrina) and when you are facing death itself (as in our own, or that of one close to us). He not only walks with us through the valley of the shadow of death, but promises to guide us to its end and step with us to a new life altogether, (see John 10:10). I think, I am on solid ground here, when I write, that may very well be the best news I have ever received...and yes...it helps me deal with my limits, with hurricanes, and with the deaths I don't particularly like – because it means the words, "The End," never roll across the screen of God's theatre. I can live with that. I really can!

— The Rev. Dr. Russell
Levenson, Christ Church,
Pensacola, Florida

Mighty Mo

My middle sister Mary, named for our mother, is quite different from the other four of us. Formerly an elementary school teacher and married to a fellow teacher, she has always exhibited, in her special, quiet way, a flinty kind of independence.

Living most of her life in upstate New York, she raised her children in imaginative and creative ways. Her house was always filled with arts and crafts projects, mostly in a state of construction or near completion. "Organized chaos", she called it, as she pushed aside the crayons and construction paper on the dining room table, always remembering to carefully close the paste jar.

Her next-door devotion to our mother and father was total and complete to the end, and her church life has always carried almost a daily responsibility. She will step-up and run the church kitchen for the homeless. She has managed the gift shop, taught and schooled the

acolytes — even carried the solid brass processional cross on Sunday mornings at the 11:00 o'clock service — always at her beloved Grace Episcopal Church, Middletown, New York. As if all of that is not enough, saintly Mary's middle name is Martha.

The last eight years of her life have been filled with a true-grit battle against breast cancer. She ran the whole, ugly gauntlet; from radiation to chemotherapy to a complete mastectomy. And she ran it without complaint. Mary became gray and skeletal. She lost her hair. Her voice may have wavered, but I never heard her whimper. Sustained by her family and her church, she battled her way through the trauma of radical surgery and then went non-stop into rehabilitation.

Upon recovery, she and her husband, Satch, spent two months touring North America in a motor home and singing hymns. They must know 200 of them. She

came back so strongly that we four siblings have taken to calling her by her baby name: she is, once again, known as "Mighty Mo."

Returning from their earnest attempt to see the entire continent, Mary quietly resolved to pick-up some of her church activities, including that of crucifer at Grace Church. She wanted to return to her friends in Christ carrying the cross again. Her only concern was the solid-brass weight she would have to heft and carry. Satch was apprehensive and said so, but Mary's will was firm.

She assured everyone that she was capable, yet, as the choir formed in the rear of the church, and she was joined by the taper bearers, she began to pray that the Lord would help her make it up the long center aisle. The organist chorded the opening bars of the processional hymn and Mary's eyes instantly widened. A joyous smile crossed her face as she picked up the cross and prepared to stride forward. Unknown to her — until that

precise moment — was the fact that the hymn chosen for that Sunday morning was number 473:

Lift high the cross,
the love of God proclaim
till all the world adore
his sacred name.

Led on their way
by this triumphant sign,
the hosts of God
in conquering ranks
combine.

O Lord once lifted
on the glorious tree,
as thou hast promised,
draw the world to thee.

So shall our song
of triumph ever be:
praise to the Crucified
for the victory.

Lift high the cross
the love of God proclaim
till all the world adore
his sacred name.

I'm sure you know by now that sister Mary Martha, "Mighty Mo", made it up the aisle triumphantly. And that's the precise word: triumphantly.

— John F. Waldron,
Virginia Beach, Virginia

Mexican Meatballs Con Queso

For a little "South of the Border" — or at least, south of the Red River taste for a pre-Lenten party, these are rich and spicy.

MEATBALLS:

- 1 1/2 pounds ground beef
- 1 1/2 cups bread crumbs
- 2 teaspoons ground cumin
- 1/4 cup minced onion
- 1/4 cup milk
- 1 tbsp. chopped parsley
- 1/2 teaspoon salt
- 1/4 teaspoon pepper
- 1 egg

Mix ground beef, bread crumbs, cumin, onion, milk, parsley, pepper and egg. Shape into balls about 3/4 to 1 inch diameter.

- Vegetable oil to coat skillet

In a large skillet, brown meatballs over medium heat, a few at a time. As they brown, remove and keep warm.

QUESO:

- 16 ounces process cheese spread (Velveeta), cubed
- 1 envelope taco seasoning mix
- 1 (4 oz.) can chopped green chiles with liquid

Combine in a microwavable dish, cover loosely, and microwave on high, stirring every 30 seconds until the cheese is melted.

Combine meatballs and queso in a serving dish or crock pot. Serve warm with tortilla chips on the side.

The Footsteps of St. Paul

A tour "The Footsteps of St. Paul" escorted by the Rt. Rev. John Buchanan and his wife, Peggy, may appeal to readers of *THE ANGLICAN DIGEST*. Bishop Buchanan is a long-time *SPEAK* Trustee and Executive Committee member. He is the retired Bishop of West Missouri and currently serves as the Assisting Bishop of Texas.

The twelve-day tour departs August 27 and returns September 7. The itinerary includes Greece, Turkey, and a three-day cruise in the Aegean Sea. The aim of the tour is to acquaint participants with 1st century Greek culture and St. Paul's introduction of Christianity into it. For example, there will be a stop at the Areopagus, where St. Paul, argued that the "Unknown God," revered by the Greeks, was the God he proclaimed. (Acts 17:19ff.) Another stop will be at Corinth, where St. Paul worked as a tentmaker and decided to take the Gospel to the Gentiles. (Acts 18:1ff.)

Following the footsteps of



Paul, there will be a brief excursion into Turkey to visit Ephesus. In Ephesus Paul encountered some disciples of John the Baptist, and after introducing them to the Good News, he baptized and laid hands on them. (Acts 19:1ff.)

The tour includes a three-day cruise in the Aegean Sea. Among the stops will be the Isle of Patmos. Paul left no footprint on Patmos, but the writer of the Book of Revelation — St. John the Divine — did.

With the comfort of participants in mind, only five hotels are used, and the tour is limited to 24 persons. The native-born guide will be highly qualified and well informed. For a detailed descriptive brochure call 800-356-9831, or call Bishop Buchanan at 843-819-1719.

Fast Food Theology

God charged Jonah with the task of telling the people of Nineveh to repent. When Jonah received this order he was absolutely scandalized. Nineveh was the enemy, plain and simple. Jonah would have liked nothing more than to see Nineveh destroyed with no warning, far out of God's good graces. He couldn't fathom the idea that God would ever want to help such a city. God knew the people of Nineveh had strayed, but wanted to give them another chance, regardless of Jonah's feelings on the matter. Jonah knew he could do nothing to change God's mind. Rather than listening to God's will, Jonah jumped on a ship and went the other way, unwilling to open his mind to any world view outside his own. He hoped to hide from God and forget all about the task that was set before him. On the journey the ship was thrown into a terrible storm, showing everyone on board the amazing power of God. Everyone except Jonah. He slept

through most of the storm, waking only when the others on the ship asked him to pray to his God for deliverance. While he admitted his wrongdoings and asked to be thrown overboard to save everyone else, he still refused to live into the mission God gave him. In spite of this, God provided a vessel to keep Jonah safe from the terrors of the sea, rather than let him suffer; a great fish to swallow him whole. Jonah saw this action as a punishment...his idea of salvation didn't have anything to do with being in the belly of a fish.

The prayer we read in Jonah 2 occurs at the moment that Jonah finally realized that God was looking out for him, that he should listen to God's word. He was spewed onto land by the fish, safe and whole, and proceeded to Nineveh to proclaim God's message. Just as he feared they repented...and God forgave. Jonah, who proclaimed from the depths of the fish "salvation belongs to the Lord!", was furious. He KNEW God would be just

and merciful and save Nineveh but didn't want to believe it. He felt that mercy should belong to his people only, that his enemies should never be shown such compassion. He was so angry he wanted to die, thinking he could not live in a world where Nineveh was so loved and where his prayers were not answered in the ways he felt were best. Throughout his entire journey Jonah was only happy when he thought he was being taken care of in accordance with his wishes. When God's will was different from his own he got angry and turned away from God. "Um, excuse me, this isn't what I ordered!"

We often ask things of God knowing full well what we want to happen, hoping things will go our way — I call this fast food theology. "Thy Kingdom come (as long as it doesn't interfere with my weekend, I've got plans). Thy will be done (unless it's not what I want to do)...give us this day our daily bread (right away please), and forgive us our trespasses (although some of them were

really necessary), as we forgive those who trespass against us (unless it's someone I really don't like). And lead us not into temptation, but deliver us from evil (preferably in the way that I want to be delivered, something that doesn't require inconvenience or sacrifice on my part)". The problem with buying into the fast food idea is that it's not unusual for our prayers to be answered in ways that we don't expect. And it's an unsettling feeling when that happens. By placing our own agenda on God we get into dangerous territory. When our plans don't go through it's easy to believe that God is ignoring our desires. But...salvation belongs to the Lord. Regardless of our own intentions, God's will for us is infinitely better than anything we could dream up on our own. Jonah had the opportunity to realize that, to have a hand in saving thousands and appreciate God's infinite mercy in the process. But it was up to Jonah to make the leap and give up his preconceived notions of what it

meant to be taken care of by God. In being unable to do so he missed out on the joy of living into his calling.

We are called to learn from Jonah's journey, to see that amazing experiences come from following God's will. Whether that will comes in the form of an unexpected answer or a giant fish, God has our best interest at heart. Having faith in that, giving up the fast food window and listening for what GOD wants, we are enabled to be open to lives free from our own selfish desires and full of abundant grace.

— Loren Hague, *King of Peace, Kingsland, Georgia*

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About the Cover

The Last Supper by Simon Ushakov. At the age 22 he became a paid artist of the Silver Chamber, affiliated with the Armory Prikaz. The bright, fresh colors and exquisite, curving lines of his icons caught the eye of Patriarch Nikon, who

introduced Simon to the Tsar Alexei Mikhailovich. Ushakov is associated with the comprehensive reform of the Russian Orthodox Church undertaken by Patriarch Nikon. He became a great favourite with the royal family and was assigned to the Kremlin Armory. Ushakov had many pupils and published a short treatise on icon-painting entitled *A Word to Loving-Meticulous Icon Painting* (1664). Some of the more conservative Russian priests regarded his icons as "lascivious works of devil" — they were too Western for their tastes. Avvakum, in particular, alleged that Ushakov painted his "fleshly saints" after his own portly appearance. Ushakov also executed secular commissions and produced engravings for book illustrations — he was one of the first secular painters in Russia. Some of his icons, transported to Western Europe, were instrumental in fomenting interest for early Russian painting. He died in Moscow June 25, 1686.

A New Knot

In early October 2005, in an ancient ceremony at the church of St. Mary-le-Bow in the City of London, the Bishop of Birmingham, Dr. John Sentamu, was confirmed as the new Archbishop of York and Primate of England.

It was an historic occasion - the first black archbishop in the history of the Church of England, though we must not forget that Archbishops of Canterbury include Augustine and Anselm from Italy and Theodore, a Greek from Tarsus.

To be an archbishop or a bishop in the Church of today is to occupy an historic office whose primary tasks are teaching, nurturing, serving and caring for the people of God, and encouraging and enabling the mission of the Church. In this, bishops are the successors of the Apostles, whom Jesus sent out to preach the good news. The bishop is described as a "Father in God", one who in exercising his ministry is called to reflect the love and

care of God, whom Jesus taught His followers to name as Father.

The Greek word for bishop is *episkopos*, the one who has oversight, and part of that oversight is to be a focus for unity in the Church, to enable the people of God to live in unity and grow in holiness. Bishops, it has been said, are "knots in the net", linking Christian communities and congregations in the deep communion and fellowship that expresses the life of the Church.

In our world today this is a challenging calling. The post-modern individualism of so much of contemporary society, and confusion about human growth and flourishing and the moral choices that such flourishing involves, pressurize churches into being a conglomeration of competing interest groups, demanding instant response and sometimes simplistic answers to complex questions. Carefully thought out statements can be reduced by the media to slogans and sound-bites. There is a continual tension between ethi-

cal norms and ideals, and the pastoral need to respond to particular people in particular circumstances, a tension between proper accountability and enabling penitence and forgiveness.

In the moving story in the Gospel in which the religious righteous demand that Jesus condemn a woman taken in adultery, Jesus challenges her "virtuous" accusers with the words: "Let the one who is without sin amongst you cast the first stone." He said nothing to her until they were left alone.

Patience, silence and reserve are sometimes greatly needed at times when there is much pressure for immediate comment and response. The wise discernment which we all need as to when to speak and when to be silent is a particular responsibility for Christian leaders.

St Paul wrote to the early Christians of Corinth about "handing on what he had also received". What he had received was Jesus' command to go on doing what Jesus had done on the night

of His betrayal, to break bread and share the cup of wine which He had identified as His body and blood, His very life offered in sacrifice.

The Christian Church has done that ever since, finding in this sacrament of the Eucharist its life, its strength and its identity. It is here that we receive "communion" – the heart of community, our belonging to one another, and our belonging to the God who made us.

The bishop, in presiding at this supper of the Lord, is a minister of that communion, as are all those whom the bishop ordains to serve the people of God. As guardian of the faith the bishop is called to hand on what the Church has received in word and in sacrament, recalling the Church to its true identity as the body of Christ – for, as the young John Wesley was once told, "there is no such thing as solitary religion" because we inescapably belong to each other.

In all its imperfection and brokenness, in all its batteredness and being mocked

by the cultured despisers of religion, the Church is there to witness to the possibility of transforming grace in human lives, that there is indeed a love that endures all things, hopes all things, and which is victorious over every darkness and evil in the world.

Bishops, like many others, are called to an impossible task, but it is God's impossible task. That is why, Sunday by Sunday, churches pray for their bishop, and why their bishop prays for them. We pray for God's blessing on John, the new Archbishop of York.

*The Rt. Rev. Geoffrey Rowell,
Bishop of Gibraltar in Europe*

Beware the Bureaucrats

NEARLY ten years ago, an article by the then Bishop of Chichester, Dr. Eric Kemp, "Following the example of Mammon", appeared in the *Church Times* (17 November 1995). It warned about the centralisation of power in the Church of England, and the danger that archbishops would come to be seen as managing directors.

The following day, Professor Richard Roberts, writing in *The Independent*, described Archbishop George Carey as "the John Birt of the Church of England", and the Church as a managed, product-driven organisation.

These words still haunt me. They seem to confirm my worst fears about the Church. I am not attacking central institutions, or even bureaucrats as such, but questioning where our priorities should lie.

We ought to be reconfiguring ministry at the local level, and trusting that the national Church will catch up in due time. Speaking to colleagues in Cornwall, another poor but creative diocese where ministry is thriving, I was told that Church House seemed utterly irrelevant. Frances Ward's recent study *Lifelong Learning* (SCM Press, 2005) could help us move forward.

In case this is seen as sectarian, let me draw attention to the focus in the Second Vatican Council on the importance of the *ecclesia particularis*. And to the fact that most of the progress within Angli-

canism in England and in other places has occurred because movements of renewal have developed at the local level.

There have been enduring examples of the renewal of ministry all over the Church. After 46 years in London, I moved last month back to my birthplace in Manchester. In both cities, I have been impressed by the holistic understanding of ministry in place after place. The local church is flourishing in many areas.

Perhaps the future of ministry depends less and less on the bishops and the bureaucrats. But, the future of the bishops and the bureaucrats depends very much on the nurturing of the grass roots. What is the point of bureaucrats and the episcopate if the rest of the Church has withered? In the world of *episcopi vagantes*, where almost all are bishops and there are few laity, this is fine — but is this what we want as Anglicans?

— *The Rev. Dr. Kenneth Leech*;
[Former Community Theologian at
St. Botolph's, Aldgate, in London,
courtesy of the CHURCH TIMES,
www.churchtimes.co.uk]

*Thesis from a
Seminary Door.*



GOOD-BYE TO ALL THAT?

The hemorrhage occurring from our Church is very real now. It is not just to other Anglican oversights and other Anglican churches that people are fleeing. It is to other churches completely. Quite a few disillusioned priests and people have gone to Rome. Others have drifted to one or another of the evangelical free churches. Others have melted away into the hills, and are sitting it out.

I saw this in myself recently when my wife and I were driving through upstate New York. It was a beautiful Fall day and the trees were absolutely on fire. Deep in the woods we came upon a "Mountain Chapel" with "evangelical" and "non-denominational" written all over it. But the church looked loved, and in its way quite beautiful. We thought to ourselves, Hmm... We could probably worship there. Looks humble, looks Bible

trusting, looks aesthetically bearable, looks friendly. Yes, we could probably worship there.

This thought would never have occurred to us a few years ago. We would have perhaps joined hearts, but not hands, with such a place, and respected its ministry. But we would always have begun with the Episcopal Church – at least the 8 o'clock service. Emotionally, inside of us, those days have passed. Ineffably, as if without official notice, yet deep inside, those days have passed. *Sic transit gloria ecclesiae*.

Yet there is a little more to it. I still see classic Prayer Book Anglicanism as having a wonderful contribution for the Christian Church and for the world. And there was nothing wrong with Anglican comprehensiveness when it really existed. You could be "Mr. Smith" or "Father Smith" and despite the little titters at diocesan convention, there was something just a little close to real toleration. And those Thirty-Nine Articles, which we should never have taken for granted

and set into the smallest of type faces, were stirring, and redolent of real religion. There was a precious verticality to it – what the poet John Betjamen called "Summoned by Bells", whether it was High Mass in Harrogate or "hymn sandwich" at All Souls, Langham Place. So much of all that has vanished in the disaster which has befallen us. It really was good.

I am not yet entirely willing to say good-bye to all that. Are you? This thing I know: If the Church would return to its 'Old, Old Story', its treasure without price, then the rest of the dry bones, which are now scattered all over the field, could come alive again.

– The Very Rev. Dr.theol.
Paul F.M. Zahl, Dean/
President, Trinity Episcopal
School for Ministry,
Ambridge, Pennsylvania





HILLSPEAKING



LET ME tell you about Godfrey, Hillspeak's "Official Greeter." His full name is Godfrey Daniels! (the exclamation point is part of his name), after an expression often used by W. C. Fields in his movies. There were times, especially in his puppyhood, when Godfrey was called by his full name (including the exclamation point). Now that he has melted into middle age, just Godfrey suffices.

Godfrey's dam was a registered border collie, but his sire was a traveler. From all appearances, he was a German shepherd. Godfrey has all the instincts and some of the markings of the border collie, but has the size of a German shepherd. He tried herding the cats in his youth but soon realized the folly of it.

Miss Vinnie's Cottage, where I now live, has a very small kitchen and Godfrey is a fairly large dog. Of course, his favorite place to hang out

is the kitchen. It takes some adroit footwork to avoid stepping on his nose or tail when I am preparing a meal. He appears to be perfectly oblivious of the possibility and contentedly snoozes while I nosh.

Godfrey is a smart dog. One reason, perhaps, is that he gnawed happily on my *American Heritage Dictionary* as a pup. With considerable help from Patient Wife, I taught him some basic manners. We taught him not to jump up on the furniture — beds, couches, whatever. We taught him not to go in the Twin Barns, obviously a biased teaching since cats are allowed to enter and leave as they please.

I walked him, on a leash, time and again around the periphery of Grindstone Mountain so he would know the boundaries of "his" property. We taught him that cats are extraordinary beings and that we mere mortals have to

be nice to them. We taught him to welcome visitors. We taught him to come at the ringing of a cowbell or the notes of a silent whistle. All of these things he learned readily and well.

One or two of them almost too well. The Twin Barns are protected by an alarm system, primarily to alert us to fire but also to note when there is any breach of the security at the end of the day's work. Before the Burtons (John is TAD's managing editor) moved in to the Old Residence, Patient Wife and I were often quite alone on Grindstone at night. When the security alarm sounded I was the one who responded. Godfrey would go with me — right up to the front door. He told me quite plainly that he had been taught NOT to go into the Twin Barns — and he waited very patiently while I went in to see if we had a burglar or if a spider or some such had crawled across one of the motion detectors.

When I had investigated, reported to the alarm company, reset the alarm, and locked the door again, Godfrey

proudly escorted me across the parking lot back to the Farm House.

Squirrels, chipmunks, and rabbits are anathema to him. He chases them off or up at every sighting. He also chases deer, but as he has mel-
lowed I notice he only chases them as far as Hillspeak's property line.

He has learned his lessons well.

If you come to Hillspeak, he will greet you. If you want to walk the Silver Cloud Trail or around the grounds, he will happily and proudly escort you. And when you leave, he will plainly tell you that he'd like to have you come again. So would we all.

— *The Trustees' Warden*

THE ORDER OF ST. ANDREW

A Religious Order of men and women, both married and single, not living in community.

For information contact:

The Father or Mother General

The Order of Saint Andrew

2 Creighton Lane

Scarborough, NY 10510

(914) 941-1265; 762-0398

<http://www.osa-anglican.org>



DEATHS



✠ JANE LANDON BAIRD, 72, in Atlanta, Georgia. Mrs. Baird was a loved and respected member of the Cathedral of St. Philip. She retired earlier this year as manager of the Cathedral Book Store after 34 years of service, the past 12 years as manager. She was an original and active member of the Episcopal Booksellers Association, and served as Treasurer from the founding of the organization until her retirement in June this year.

✠ HOBART M. BANKS, JR., 79, in San Francisco, California. Dr. Banks was a clinical psychologist who worked for the State of California for 30 years. He worked with parolees of the California prison system. Before retiring he was the assistant director of the Parole Psychiatric Outpatient Clinic. Banks served the Episcopal Church at the diocesan, regional and national level and was a deputy to General Convention in 1994 and 1997.

✠ THE REV. DIANE WOOLARD BRAGG, 60, in Londonderry,

New Hampshire. She served as rector at St. David's, Salem, New Hampshire, from 1997 until her retirement in 2005. She was ordained to the Diaconate at Christ Church Cathedral, Houston, Texas in 1983, and the following year was ordained to the Priesthood at Church of the Holy Comforter in Angelton, Texas. She was the fourth woman to be ordained in the Diocese of Texas. In 1983, she joined the chaplain staff at St. Luke's Episcopal Hospital in the Texas Medical Center in Houston and was the first ordained woman priest to serve as chaplain.

✠ THE REV. JOHN CLAYPOOL, 74, in Atlanta, Georgia. He was visiting professor of preaching at Mercer University's McAfee School of Theology. A former Baptist pastor, he became an Episcopal priest in 1986 and served as rector of St. Luke's, Birmingham, Alabama, for nearly 14 years before retiring. A graduate of Baylor Univer-

sity in Waco, Texas, and Southern Baptist Theological Seminary in Louisville, Fr. Claypool authored 11 books, including *God is an Amateur*, *Tracks of a Fellow Struggler*, *Mending the Heart*, and *Stories Jesus Still Tells: The Parables*. Fr. Claypool delivered the prestigious Lyman Beecher Lectures in Preaching at Yale University in 1978.

✠ THE REV. CANON GEORGE FREDERICK FRENCH, 82, of Cooperstown, New York. Canon French was ordained Priest in November 1952 in Union College Chapel, Schenectady, by the Rt. Rev. Frederick L. Barry. He served St. George's, Schenectady, as Curate from 1952 until 1955 when he became Rector of Christ Church, Cooperstown. Upon retiring in July 1988, he was named Rector Emeritus of Christ Church. Canon French was a member of the Theological Education Offering Committee of General Seminary, and served on the Board of Governors of St. Margaret's Babies Hospital, Albany, the Board of Directors of St. Francis Homes for Boys,

Lake Placid, and the Commission on Ministry of the Diocese of Albany. In August 1980, he was made an Honorary Canon of the Cathedral of All Saints, Albany.

✠ THE REV. CANON ROSWELL O. MOORE, 78, in Bend, Oregon. Canon Moore was ordained to the diaconate and the priesthood in 1951 and served on the pastoral staff of Syracuse University in Syracuse, New York, and as program consultant for the Diocese of Central New York. He published *The Practice of Evangelism*. He was rector of two parishes: Christ Church in Exeter, New Hampshire, and Trinity in Menlo Park, California. In 1982, he was installed as an honorary canon of Grace Cathedral in San Francisco and was awarded an honorary doctor of divinity by the Church Divinity School of the Pacific in Berkeley in 1993. After retiring from parish ministry, he served as president of the Episcopal Church Province of the Pacific from 1982 to 1988. He served on the Episcopal Church National Council from 1988 to 1994. He

went to Bend to serve as a volunteer for the Episcopal Church in eastern Oregon.

✠ **WARREN CLEMENT RAMSHAW**, 79, in Hamilton, New York. He was an active participant in the life of Colgate University, the Episcopal Church, the Village of Hamilton, and, in his retirement, as a docent of the Art Advisory Committee of the Munson-Williams-Proctor Institute of Utica. Dr. Ramshaw was deeply involved in the life of the Episcopal Church at all levels — parish [warden, treasurer, lector, eucharistic minister, teacher], Diocese [Standing Committee, Commission on Ministry, eight times deputy to General Convention], and National Church [Chair of the Board for Theological Education; Chair of the General Board of Examining Chaplains, member of the Executive Council]. He served for many years as the representative from his diocese to Province II.

✠ **HOWARD EDDINS ROSS**, 68, in Dallas, Texas. During his 39 years at Church of the Transfiguration, he organized

three youth choirs, a men's *Schola Cantorum*, and a handbell choir, in addition to the traditional adult choir. Since 1957, Mr. Ross was on the American Guild of Organists in Dallas. He received a bachelor's degree in music education and a master's degree in performance from Southern Methodist University. He began his Dallas church music career as organist and choir-master at St. Michael and All Angels and was director of music at St. Alban's in Arlington before going to the Church of the Transfiguration. Mr. Ross also served on the board of the Association of Anglican Musicians and was a consultant to the National Network of Lay Professionals in the Episcopal Church. He had been the group's president.

✠ **THE REV. LEVERING BARTINE SHERMAN**, 84, in Hendersonville, North Carolina. Born in Wuchang, China, the son of missionary parents, he returned to the United States in 1929. During World War II, his oriental language skills led him to become a Japanese interpreter for the Navy in the

South Pacific. He attended Virginia Theological Seminary and served parishes in North and South Carolina. He served on numerous boards in the Diocese of North Carolina and was deputy to General Convention. He focused on Christian education and was a firm believer in the role of the church in advocacy causes.

✠ THE REV. KATRINA SWANSON, 70, in Manset Village, Maine. The fourth generation of her family to enter the ministry, the Rev. Swanson was one of the "Philadelphia 11," a group of women ordained in an irregular and controversial ceremony in that city on July 29, 1974. The Radcliffe graduate was ordained by her father, the late Rt. Rev. Edward Welles II, who had long advocated ordination of women. Her status as a priest became official after the Episcopal Church approved the ordination of women in 1976. Two years later, she became a rector of St. John's in Union City, New Jersey, where she instituted bilingual Spanish and English services

and established an after-school program for children.

✠ THE REV. DAVID M. TALBOT, 81, in Syracuse, New York. Fr. Talbot served parishes in Ohio and New York. His last parish before retirement was St. John's, Woodlands Ithaca.

✠ THE REV. ROBERT ALLEN TOURIGNEY, 86, in The Woodlands, Texas. He had served most recently as associate rector at Trinity Church in Spring, Texas. Fr. Tourigney served St. Francis' Church, Palos Verdes Estates, California as vicar from its founding in 1951 until it achieved parish status in January of 1953, when he became its first rector. Upon retirement in 1988, he was elected rector emeritus. Prior to his tenure at St. Francis' Church, he was director of youth ministries for the Diocese of Los Angeles (1949-51), an assistant at St. Andrew's in Ann Arbor, Michigan and an assistant at St. Matthew's Church, San Mateo, Calif.

✠ *"May they rest in peace and rise in glory."* ✠

Ways to Give to the Ministry of Hillspeak

God gives gifts to his children in order that they might enjoy him and, in sharing their gifts, reveal and build his kingdom. Our first commitment is always to our local parish. We are also called to extend our reach to the ends of the earth. Hillspeak reaches round the world with its ministry of the written word through **THE ANGLICAN DIGEST**, the **Anglican Book Club**, **Operation Pass Along**, and the **Anglican Bookstore** as well as the letters and e-mails that are exchanged daily. The Foland Library serves as a repository for information useful to writers and researchers who come to Hillspeak. Our guest quarters offer refuge for visitors.

Recognizing the importance of being able to have a permanent memorial for loved ones and friends, the Board of Trustees decided to also offer, in addition to Memorial Bricks, a Book of Remembrance. This means of honoring loved ones and friends in a permanent display at Hillspeak is available for a donation of any amount. The Book of Remembrance will be on display in the public area of the Twin Barns and will be accessible to visitors.

Your help in this ministry in a tangible way is necessary and appreciated. There are a number of ways in which you can support the ministries of Hillspeak:

- Direct gifts of cash, checks or by credit card
- Donation to record a memorial in Book of Remembrance
- Purchase of Hillspeak Memorial Bricks to honor loved ones
- Gifts of stocks, property, or insurance policies
- Including us in your will

For more information on making a gift to TAD, contact our General Manager, Mr. Tom Walker by phone at (800) 572-7929 or by e-mail to speak@peakinc.org.

CREAM OF THE CROP



The ANGLICAN BOOK CLUB's Spring selection is *Eat This Book: A Conversation in the Art of Spiritual Reading* by Eugene H. Peterson.

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AND IN ALL PLACES



✠ **RIPON CATHEDRAL** will ask its congregation whether it should replace its Victorian “ramrod back” pews with modern chairs. A member of the committee recommending the change for the 1,300-year-old building said: “Our pews are very uncomfortable because of their shape. Hardened concert-goers bring their own cushions.”

✠ **A CHURCH IN ESSEX** has been allowed to keep a poster showing a man hugging a child beneath the words “Miracles, Healing, Faith,” despite complaints to the Advertising Standards Agency that the poster was misleading and irresponsible. The ASA said: “We considered that most people in the UK were aware of Christian beliefs and would understand that the poster referred to spiritual, not physical, miracles and healing.”

✠ **THE VATICAN’S DOCTRINAL WATCHDOG**, the US Archbishop William Levada, has called for a meeting of the world’s bishops to discuss whether

Communion should be withheld from politicians who support abortion rights.

✠ **AMERICA’S SOUTHERN BAPTIST CONVENTION** has started a campaign to “Witness, Win, and Baptize” one million people by September 30, 2006. “This is a plea to all Southern Baptists across the nation to join hands,” said the SBC president Bobby Welch. “It will take you, me, and others in our convention working together for the cause of Christ and the souls of men to reach those who are lost.”

✠ **KENNETH E NORIAN, TSSF** was elected Minister Provincial of the Third Order, Society of Saint Francis Province of the Americas at their annual meeting. Mr. Norian resides in Hicksville, Long Island, NY and attends St. Jude’s in Wantagh, NY. He has been a Third Order Franciscan since 1984 and was life professed in the Third Order in 1989. He has served the community as Formation Counselor, Formation Class Leader, Con-

venor, and Area Chaplain.

✠ TWO BROTHERS IN EASTERN INDIA were fined by their village council for keeping a pet ghost. An exorcist summoned by villagers blamed the brothers' pet ghost for "a recent outbreak of disease in the locality."

✠ THANK YOU to the kind but unidentified person in Maryland who sent OPERATION PASS ALONG a carefully wrapped copy of the 1911 *Grace Before Meals*. It shall find a home with an Anglican priest in Nigeria.

✠ SAINT THOMAS CHOIR SCHOOL, New York City, announced the first endowed choristership at the world-renowned school. Susan and Denny Lewis, parishioners and long-time benefactors of the Saint Thomas music program, established the Ogden Northrop Lewis, Jr. Choristership, as a permanent memorial to their son. They asked that the Lewis Chorister be chosen for his integrity, kindness, and leadership qualities – all traits recognized and admired in their son from his early years at the Buckley School, at Groton, and later at Harvard. The Rev.

Charles F. Wallace is headmaster.

✠ THE REV. JOSEPH KIFAU KOPAPA KOPAPA was elected the new Bishop for the Diocese of Popondota. He is currently the Chaplain of Martyrs' Memorial School near Popondetta, the Anglican Church of Papua, New Guinea's oldest high school. He replaces Bishop Roger Jupp, who resigned in January 2005.

✠ BRITAIN'S FIRST HINDU state school will open in London, probably by 2010. The Department for Education and Skills is to give Harrow Council in northwest London \$9.8m for the faith school. Harrow has the largest percentage of Hindus in the country.

✠ CHRISTIAN VOICE, a fundamentalist Protestant pressure group, said it would try to prosecute bookshops selling the Koran for inciting religious hatred under proposed racial and religious hatred laws. Its director, Stephen Green, said: "If the Koran is not hate speech, I don't know what is. Nowhere in the Bible does it say that unbelievers must be killed."

✠ **HINDUS ASKED FOR DIWALI**, the "festival of lights" celebrated by Hindus, Sikhs, and Jains, to be made a national bank holiday.

✠ **PRESIDENT HUGO CHAVEZ** of Venezuela ordered the New Tribes Mission, a Florida-based US Christian missionary group working with indigenous tribes, to leave the country, accusing the organization of "imperialist infiltration."

✠ **CIVILTÀ CATTOLICA** (*Catholic Civilisation*), a leading Catholic magazine in Italy, condemned boxing as "a legalized form of attempted homicide," driven by "cruel" businessmen. The magazine claimed 500 boxers have died from injuries sustained in the ring over the past 100 years.

✠ **A BUDDHIST SANCTUARY** near Young, Arizona, took in 130 dogs left homeless by Hurricane Katrina.

✠ **SISTER CHRISTINA** was installed as the Mother Superior of the All Saints - Sisters of the Poor, a traditional Anglo-Catholic convent located near Baltimore, Maryland. The Sisters have chosen a monastic lifestyle,

profess a vow of poverty, and seek simplicity.

✠ **AN ENVIRONMENTAL AGENCY** backed by Catholic bishops joined the Uniting Church and other Christian networks in opposing the growth of uranium mining in Australia. Christian environmentalists fear that corporate self-interest is being put before theological and moral considerations.

✠ **DAVID BLUNKETT** URGED **BRITISH MUSLIMS** to embrace equal rights for women. "Quite a number of people from South Asia in our country who have no job, and who are not connected to society, are women. Learning English, engagement with employment, and the ability to leave home to shop freely are all part of developing equality and overcoming poverty," he said.

✠ **JEWS IN CRAKOW** appointed their first full-time rabbi since the Holocaust. Rabbi Avraham Flaks, a Russian-born Israeli, will minister to 200 of the Polish city's estimated 1,200 Jews, many of whom are discovering their Jewish roots. Michael Freund, of the Shavei Israel organisation, said that

many Jews hid their religious affiliation to avoid discrimination in the past.

✠ THE FIRST OUTBREAK OF POLIO in the US in 26 years occurred in Minnesota in a community of the Amish, who usually decline to vaccinate their children. Four children were infected with the virus — none became paralyzed. The last large outbreak of polio occurred in Amish communities in 1979.

✠ MUSLIM DIPLOMATS living in Denmark protested to the Danish Prime Minister after the popular *Jyllands-Posten* newspaper published cartoons lampooning the prophet Muhammad. The paper's editor said: "We live in a democracy where satire and caricature are generally accepted, and religion should not set limits on that."

✠ THE REV. CANON PHILIP WRIGHT became the 14th Bishop of the Diocese of Belize in succession to the Rt. Rev. Sylvestre Romero who resigned in 2004. Canon Wright was ordained in 1992 to the Sacred Order of Deacons and in 1993 to the Sacred Order of Priests.

He served the church in pastoral and teaching ministries, in various parishes, and in several Diocesan Committees. He was most recently the Priest-in-Residence at St. Ann's Parish, Belmopan. He has also been the Director of the Anglican Theological Institute, responsible for the training of individuals for leadership roles in the church and the ordained ministry.

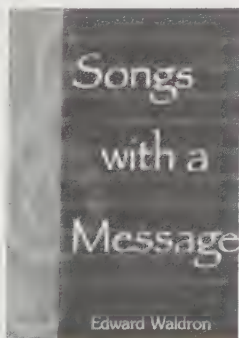
✠ ST. CHRISTOPHER'S COMMUNITY (EPISCOPAL) CHURCH on the Steamboat Island Peninsula on the outskirts of Olympia, Washington is served by the Rev. Peter Van Zanten and Lutheran pastor, the Rev. Sandra Kreis. St. Christopher's is the only church on the entire peninsula and the only civic organization of any kind. A major expansion is now underway to build a community center. With the small church at capacity, space is needed for parish activities on Sunday while during the week, the facility will be used to senior programs, day care, and other community activities. The congregation has raised close to half a million

towards the project through its capital campaign and is now finalizing funding for the remainder of the project hoping to break ground in June of 2006.

✠ CHRIST EPISCOPAL CHURCH, the oldest church still in use in Springfield, Missouri, broke ground on its \$2.5 million building expansion in December during a Day of Celebration at the Church. The Rt. Rev. Barry R. Howe, bishop of the Diocese of West Missouri, mounted a backhoe and broke ground on the project. The expansion was designed by church member and architect Ed Waters of Marshall, Waters and Woody Architects and will be built by church member Kenny Ross of Morelock-Ross builders. The expansion is necessary because of growing membership and ministries of the church and because of the congregation's desire to minister to the spiritual needs of a revitalized downtown. Christ Episcopal Church, founded in 1859, is the oldest and largest Episcopal congregation in the area with more than 1,000 members.

WE RECOMMEND

Songs with a Message by Edward Waldron (Providence House Publishers). Edward Waldron is a retired Episcopal priest who lives in Boston with his wife Helen. *Songs with a Message* celebrates his lifetime of writing and sharing kids' songs, folk songs, hymns, Christmas songs, anthems, and music for the mass. Fr. Waldron shares his God-given gift of music with the world. That music has shaped his life and thoughts, as well as his relationship with God and his neighbors.



An engaging mix of sheet music and written personal anecdotes, *Songs with a Message* celebrates and preserves the legacy of one of today's influential worship leaders. With kids', folk, Christmas, service, and Mass songs plus hymns and

anthems for the liturgy, this songbook is sure to excite and inspire many. (Paperback) \$24



***Thou Art My Refuge: Psalms of Salvation and Mercy* (CD)**

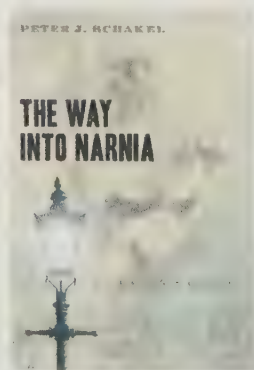
by Gloria Dei Cantores, Elizabeth C. Patterson, Director (Paraclete Press).

The Psalms have been used for private and public worship for thousands of years. While they have been interpreted in numerous ways, they have been a source of hope and comfort for many. Now, Gloriam Dei Cantores presents a three-volume series of the Psalms of David. Gloriam Dei Cantores provides a wealth of experience in the communication of the rich texts of these psalms, having chanted the psalms for nearly three decades in worship services. Perfect for

contemplative listening at any place or time, *Thou Art My Refuge* will be welcomed by all who love the Psalms for their beautiful poetry and spiritual depth. \$16.95

THE WAY INTO NARNIA: A Reader's Guide, by Peter J. Schakel, Peter C. & Emajean Cook Professor of English at Hope College in Holland, Michigan, and an internationally respected scholar of C. S. Lewis's work.

How did a middle-aged professor with no children write books that have become beloved classics of children's literature? What is the best order for reading the *Chronicles of Narnia*? Whatever one's question, *The*



Way Into Narnia offers valuable guidance for first-time visitors to Narnia and fresh insights for those who have already traveled there often.

Exploring ideas from Lewis's friend J. R. R. Tolkien, Schakel shows that the best way to enter Narnia is to read the *Chronicles* as fairy tales. After walking readers through each of the books, he concludes the tour with a unique section of annotations that clarify unfamiliar words and unusual passages.

Item E939T (softbound, 202 pp, notes, index) **\$14**

ON THE WAY TO JESUS CHRIST, by Joseph Ratzinger (Pope Benedict XVI)

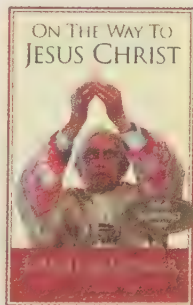
Jesus Christ is as popular as ever. Films, books, and news articles ask, "Who was Jesus Christ?" Even outside Christianity he continues to appeal to people. And yet for so many, the popular Jesus is not the Jesus of Christianity.

The popular Jesus makes no demands and never challenges people. He accepts everybody and everything under all circumstances.

On the Way to Jesus Christ is a series of meditations that Pope Benedict XVI wrote while he was Prefect for the Congregation of the Doctrine of the Faith. The true Jesus, he writes, is the Jesus of the Gospels, who "is quite different, demanding, bold. The Jesus who makes everything OK for everyone is a phantom, a dream, not a real figure. The Jesus of the Gospels is certainly not convenient for us. But it is precisely in this way that he answers the deepest question of our existence, which – whether we want to or not – keeps us on the lookout for God, for a gratification that is limitless, for the infinite. We must again set out on the way to this real Jesus."

On the Way to Jesus Christ is for anybody – believer or unbeliever – who wants better to understand the true Jesus, the Jesus of the Gospels, the Christ of Christianity.

Item I165T (hardbound, 170 pp) **\$19.95**



"Stains on My Alb"

Spread like empty crucifix, my alb rests
Not on the flat space of sacristy preparation
but on white porcelain of a wash-day tub.

Examine each part, observe stories expressed.
Mist gently, ablution for absolution.

Around the collar, uneven pattern of stain,
Intense legacy of funereal paradox: grief and hope.

At each shoulder, beige joy pressed by faces,
darker red of lips — a head buried in sorrow.

Around each cuff, rubbings: wrists lifted high, tucked low,
repetitious offering.

At the front,
Small red splash, left as trace of blood on a bandage.

Under each arm, warm scents of labor,
midwifery of liturgy and word; honest toil of birthing souls.

Along the sides, erasure from smaller hands of children,
smudge of crayon tucked in tiny hands at sacramental rail.

At the hem, dark trail, catch of heels folded under,
obeisance to the mystery of reserved holiness.

The stains of my alb mix with the water that dilutes and
purifies all outward signs of inward grace.

The palette fresh for the next portrait:
giving, sharing,
holding, letting go,
lifting up, bowing low,
dance of vocation caught in the mundane.

— The Rev. Anne Weatherholt, St. Mark's, Boonsboro, Maryland

In Appreciation

With the first issue of the forty-eighth volume of THE ANGLICAN DIGEST, a change in the masthead was made with reluctance. Two long-time members of SPEAK's Board of Trustees have stepped down.

The Rev. Canon James P. DeWolfe, Jr. of Fort Worth, Texas, joined the Board in 1975. Fr. DeWolfe is Rector Emeritus of All Saints', Fort Worth. He served on the Executive Committee of the Board for the last twenty years. Because the Executive Committee meets at Hillspeak twice a year in addition to the Annual Meeting of the full board, Fr. DeWolfe and his wife, Mary,

were frequent and special visitors. Fr. DeWolfe always brought his ready smile and encouraging words when he came to Hillspeak.

Mr. William S. (Brother) Pritchard, Jr., Esq. of Birmingham, Alabama, joined the Board in 1998. Brother, Managing Partner of Pritchard, McCall & Jones, and his wife, Ann, have been steadfast encouragers of all the staff. Brother brought the insights of a faithful layman and corporate lawyer to the Board.

Thank you both for the services you so generously donated to this ministry and for a job well done.



Our Readers Write...

Professor Adrian Hastings' reflections on the 20th century "note the struggle between Christianity and Communism, and suggest that the "other rival" is or was "liberal, capitalist, scientific humanism." [THE ANGLICAN DIGEST, Transfiguration, 2005, p. 50]

With the greatest respect to the late Professor Hastings, there was also that little thing about Fascism, which most – if not all – Christians found equally, if not more, abhorrent. While for most Europeans and North Americans, this struggle peaked in the middle of the last century, Christians elsewhere in the world have had

to continue this struggle both before and since. (To mention Dietrich Bonhoeffer without mentioning the struggle that killed him is an interesting omission.)

Communism did indeed "explode into dissolution." The threats posed today to both the Church and the individual by illiberal, authoritarian and indeed unscientific dogmas in the "post-9/11" 21st century are, I submit, greater than those posed by humanism. In Brecht's words, "...for though the world stood up and stopped the Bastard, the Bitch that bore him is in heat again."

— Peter Dawson,
Parish of St. George,
Halifax, Nova Scotia

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Running Away Eyes

Ever since I came across the following passage this week in the novel I am reading called *Petals of Blood*, by Kenyan writer Ngugi wa Thiong'o, I have not been able to get it out of my mind. It is not speaking of a missionary, but of a Kenyan teacher from an urban area who has come into a rural district in his country to teach. Nevertheless, the analogy with a missionary is not much of a stretch. "They" in the passage are the villagers:

"They appreciated it that he from the other world had agreed to stay among them. They could see his readiness to stay in his eyes, which did not carry restlessness: the others had always carried wanting-to-run-away eyes and once they had the slightest complaint they always went away in a hurry and never returned."

Do I, I ask myself, betray "wanting-to-run-away eyes"

to the Ugandans I greet every day? And if so, where are my eyes, and by extension my thoughts, "running away to?" The answer to the latter part of the question is not as obvious as it seemed at first. At least that is one conclusion my reflections have led me to this week. I have realized I may be tempted to run away to another time in my life as well as to another geographical place. I came across an interesting precedent for this temptation in the Bible.

The Episcopal Lectionary has been following the book of Job in its Morning Prayer readings. I read about one place my eyes are tempted to "run away to" – the past. In Chapter 29, Job is describing his earlier life and longing to return to happier days. He says,

"How I long for the months gone by, for the days when God watched over me? Oh, for the days when I was in my prime and my children were around me" (Job 29:2; 4-5)

For those of us on the other side of 50, the temptation for our eyes to run away to the past may be great. Memories are wonderful, when they lead to thanksgiving for the good things and times and people God has given us, but they can become temptations when they cause us to reject the present God is giving us today or the tomorrow he has already planned for us. I confess I sometimes succumb to this temptation. The way forward is clearly repentance and the accepting of God's forgiveness.

If I should not let my eyes "run away" to the home I love and have left, or to the past, where should I focus them? What can calm their restlessness? Today is Holy Cross Day, and the reading from the biblical book of Numbers recounts the time when Moses makes a bronze snake and lifts it up in the wilderness to save the Israelites who have been bitten by poisonous snakes:

"Anyone who is bitten can look at it and live" (21:8). Jesus in the Gospel of John (3:14) compares his future crucifixion to the bronze snake on the pole when he says, "so the Son of Man must be lifted up, that everyone who believes in him may have eternal life."

I have felt challenged this week to watch the direction my eyes are looking. As the writer of Hebrews exhorts us, "Let us fix our eyes on Jesus" (12:2). I pray that God might help me to overcome the temptation to look at my life with "wanting-to-run-away-eyes" and instead to fix my eyes on Jesus, the author and perfecter of our faith.

– Peggy Noll, from a collection titled *With the Eyes of the Heart: One Missionary's Perspectives from Uganda* Christian University, Mukono.

[It is available for \$9.95/copy plus \$1.50 postage and handling from Uganda Partners, Box 38333, Dallas, TX 75238]

Temptation

Then Jesus was led up by the Spirit into the wilderness to be tempted by the devil. He fasted forty days and forty nights, and afterwards he was famished.

Matthew 4:1-2

It begins with temptation. It always has. That is the human condition from the Garden of Eden on. We know temptation like the back of our hand. The cookie jar that was off-limits may be one of our earliest memories. Yet, it is difficult for us to accept the temptations of Jesus as being anything like ours. That is not actually humble on our part; it simply makes less of him.

The temptations of Jesus out in the wilderness seem so grand compared to our often trivial wanderings. They do seem beyond our imaginations. The devil asked him to change stones into bread; a miracle for no good reason. Next, he was asked to jump off the pinnacle of the temple; a cheap

magic trick to show off his immortality. Finally, he was shown the kingdoms of the world and offered them if he would just worship the devil; an offering of only false ambition. And Jesus turned him down.

We need to know that the temptations offered Jesus were real to him. Real temptations. Real decisions to be made. Real consequences to live with. Tempted just like human beings have always been tempted; just like we are.

"Just like we are" is the operative phrase. Because, underneath each of the temptations offered to Jesus in the wilderness was one basic temptation. It was the elemental temptation to deny who he was and how he was going to be. To follow any other path would be to deny his mission, his vocation, his being. If the time in the wilderness was supposed to teach him anything, it must have taught him that. And as his ministry took

form, there were always other voices asking him to be somebody else. Asking him to be their idea of the Messiah. Asking him to sound and act more like a Savior they would easily recognize. Asking him to be more of a healer and miracle worker, a more traditional kind of teacher, a more visible hero. And Jesus turned them down.

Lent can be just forty days and nights of trivial temptations about things that don't really matter all that much. Or it can be a creative wilderness time to ask ourselves some deeper questions. You see, we really do share the elemental temptation of Jesus. Our temptation is always to deny who we are, and how we are supposed to be, and instead, keep trying to become 'someone else' for all the 'someone elses' out there in the world. We are always tempted to quit being who we are instead of discovering the person God has always wanted us to be . . . ourselves.

Being ourselves in a world that constantly asks us to be someone else is the most difficult task we can have in life, and it is a task that never goes away. It doesn't mean that we don't need to try to improve. People do get better. People do put aside destructive ways of behaving. It just means that we don't need to try to become another person in order to be loved by God. That is hard enough for us to believe. But it is the Gospel truth.

Being yourself is hard work. It is tiring work. But it is interesting to note that when Jesus himself had finished his time in the wilderness, angels came and took care of him. Angels are waiting to care for us too in the midst of our temptations. But we have to risk some wilderness time first in order for that to happen.

— The Rev. Jeffrey H.
Walker, Christ
Church Greenwich,
Greenwich, Connecticut

Advertisement

and places dear to the family. Townships, schools, homes and colleges "even St. Mary's Church" were all either closed or razed because of government policy. Worse followed "vilification, death threats, and actual attempts on Desmond's life. Leading the Domestic Workers and Employers Project in Johannesburg, Leah was abused by Johannesburg's white "madams" and harassed by the authorities.

Despite it all, their marriage triumphed, and on July 2, 2005, they celebrated their 50th wedding anniversary.

Preaching at a Eucharist in Holy Cross Church, near the Tutu's home in Soweto, Johannesburg, Bishop Michael Nuttall, who has become known as the bishop who was "Number Two to Tutu," summoned up his opening Old Testament reading:

"God has been merciful to you both through all these years, with that "enduring kindness" of which the psalms love to speak. What is

more, you have been able to grow old together."

Noting the anniversary's proximity to the celebrations of the 50th anniversary of the adoption of the South Africa's Freedom Charter, he added: "Today, as you come to celebrate these fifty golden years and to renew your marriage vows (your personal freedom charter), you are saying like Sarah and Tobias "Amen, Amen', your "yes" and your "thank you" for the blessings you have had."

Bishop Michael's words were underlined when the Tutu's youngest daughter, the Rev. Mpho Tutu Burris, led her parents in the renewal of their vows. When Leah was asked to repeat the words "for better, for worse," she departed from the text. With a little giggle, she said: "For better and better."

— John Allen

[The writer is the author of *Rabblrouser for Peace*, the authorized biography of Desmond Tutu, which is scheduled for publication by The Free Press in Autumn 2006.]

Unraveling the Rapture Myth

I recently led parishioners through a study of the Revelation to John. Equipped with commentaries and a reading plan, we set out to discover what this part of scripture had to offer. We found plenty.

We began the class with a sketch of the cultural and political situation of the churches to which Revelation was written and a word of caution in the form of two quotations. Many Christians are, unfortunately, like Luther in that they would prefer Revelation not to have been included in the canon of scripture. I consider the theology of Revelation to be both sound and necessary. I mentioned G. K. Chesterton's comment that while John saw many strange creatures in his vision, he saw no creature so strange as some of his interpreters(!). One of these "strange creatures" was John Nelson Darby, the founder of Dispensationalism, which has dominated popular interpretation of Revelation and is the

inspiration behind the *Left Behind* novels.

As we read through Revelation, we noticed the concerns and theology of *Left Behind* diverge substantially from the concerns and theology of Revelation. Perhaps the most famous instance of this divergence is the popular doctrine of "the Rapture," the notion that at some point (depending upon which school of interpretation you belong to) all true Christians will be removed from the world, which will be engulfed by suffering, unprecedented violence, and the onslaught of Satan. Has *Left Behind* left Revelation behind?

Most readers of Revelation are surprised to learn that the biblical text cited to support the doctrine of the Rapture is actually not in Revelation. To find a specific reference to the removal of Christians from the world, one has to turn to 1 Thessalonians 4:16-17, where Paul says that they "will be caught up in the clouds ... to meet the Lord in the air." While both Paul and Revelation have an apocalyp-

tic eschatology, which is to say they share the same fundamental assumptions about the consummation of God's purposes, it is difficult to say that the Rapture plays an integral (or even important) role in Paul's thought (note its absence from his important treatments of eschatology in Romans 8 and 1 Corinthians 15) and it is clear that the Rapture plays no role in Revelation.

A basic principle of scriptural interpretation is the importance of distinguishing between something being biblical and something simply being mentioned in the Bible. For example, the doctrine of the Trinity is not mentioned in the Bible (hence the opposition by some to it). However, early Christian theologians such as St. Gregory of Nazianzus argued that the doctrine was thoroughly biblical insofar as it rendered coherent the biblical revelation as a whole. The Rapture seems to be a case of the opposite sort. While it is mentioned in the Bible (possibly), it does not appear to be biblical.

There is more at stake here than offering criticism of a popular religious book which advances a literalist agenda. Efforts to denounce *Left Behind*, like efforts to denounce *The DaVinci Code*, cannot serve as the basis for sound teaching (mistaken though both books are). What is needed is to not leave Revelation behind, but to allow it to speak to us in all of its splendor and power.

The doctrine of the Rapture seems problematic for two principal reasons.

First, the Rapture contradicts the theology of the Christian life embraced by Revelation. The notion that Christians will be removed from the world to protect them from its final suffering runs against the very archetype of the Christian life which for Revelation is Jesus Christ, described in the opening verses of the book as "the faithful witness, the firstborn of the dead, and the ruler of the kings of the earth" (1:5). The word rendered "witness" here by the NRSV is the Greek word from which we

get "martyr." Jesus, for Revelation, is the ultimate martyr, the one who in and through his suffering and death bore witness to God. The Jesus who died in apparent defeat at the hands of worldly power, whose faithfulness embraced even a shameful death, was not defeated, but is now precisely "the ruler of the kings of the earth." The hope of the Church in Revelation is not that Christians will be removed from the world to a place of safety when things get really bad, but that even in the midst of suffering, death and the onslaught of Satan, the witness of the Church, even while contradicted continually, will be fruitful and victorious because in this she follows the pattern of her Lord.

In one of the most poignant visions of Revelation we see Christian martyrs "who have been slaughtered for the word of God and the testimony they had given" (6:9). These Christians have not been raptured out of the world but have died as mar-

tyrs giving witness to and sharing the fate of their Lord. They (understandably) call out to God for vindication from beneath the altar located in God's heavenly temple. With this vision Revelation reminds us that while they have died as failures in the eyes of the world, their lives are seen as sacrifices which have been offered to God in a replication of the sprinkling of sacrificial blood at the base of the altar of burnt offering (Exodus 29:10-14).

The knowledge which Revelation seeks to impart is not a detailed set of predictions about the world's future, but the knowledge which the Church will need to persevere in a world whose redemption is not yet complete. In a word this knowledge is "Jesus Christ, and him crucified (1 Cor. 2:2), and this is why Revelation can describe itself not as the revelation of the Rapture but as "the revelation of Jesus Christ" (1:1).

Second, the Rapture doctrine seems to ignore Revelation's theology of creation. Revelation is suffused with

citations of and allusions to Old Testament texts. The Old Testament is not a book of religious history but the word of God which continues to speak. For Revelation, the Father of Jesus Christ is the Creator and the doctrine of creation is seen as part of the bedrock of the Christian faith.

As the Church faces severe persecution and Satan appears to have seized control of the world, Revelation affirms that this very world really is God's creation and that the Creator refuses to give up on it or to abandon it to itself. Ultimately, it is trust in the faithfulness of the Creator, a faithfulness demonstrated in Jesus' death and resurrection, that is the foundation of the Church's hope.

What we do not find in Revelation are Christians longing to be freed from creation into some completely spiritual place of peace and purity. Such longing is simply Gnostic fantasy. We will not be raptured out of the world but God will redeem the world. Revelation concludes not with raptured

souls winging their way to heaven but with the descent of the Creator into his creation so that "the home of God is among mortals" (21:3). Echoing and fulfilling Exodus 40:34-38, the world becomes God's tabernacle.

The Rapture doctrine is wrong, because it is fundamentally mistaken about the nature of the Christian life and the nature of creation. Revelation's promise to us is not that we will be removed from the world of suffering and tribulation but that God will bring us and creation through suffering and tribulation to resurrection, just as he brought his Son through them to new life.

All of us who teach in the Church need to be reminded that a corrupt eschatology leads inevitably to a corrupt gospel. Good theology really does matter for the life of the Church.

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From the Editor...

Risking for the Kingdom

...pastors were encouraged to "play it safe" and not make waves. "It happens even now," he said, "where you see pastors who are content to 'play it safe.'" So ended a recent article quoting Jim Ferree, a veteran of the civil rights struggle, who participated in a panel discussion on race in America led by Tim Tyson, a senior research scholar at the Center for Documentary Studies at Duke University.

I wonder if Lent is a time when we are called to wrestle deeply with the question: where am I resting content and playing it too safely?

"Now the LORD said to Abram, 'Go from your country and your kindred and your father's house to the land that I will show you'" (Genesis 12:1). Did Abraham have any idea where he was going or how long it would take to get there? No, but he journeyed

out because God called him on.

"But rise and enter the city, and you will be told what you are to do" (Acts 9:6). Did Paul have any idea who he would meet in the city and what he would be told after he heard these words on the Damascus road? No, but he walked forward because Christ burned into his memory and heart and told him to go.

Jesus said to Peter who had asked about the future of another disciple, "If it is my will that he remain until I come, what is that to you? Follow me!" (John 21:22). Could Peter have possibly known then all of the implications of that challenge? No — but he went.

Is it possible that we are too comfortable and too careful? May the God who said "Go...rise...Follow" lovingly prod us this Lent to take kingdom risks for the sake of Christ's eternal glory, and may the Holy Spirit give us the power to respond.

— KSH+

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